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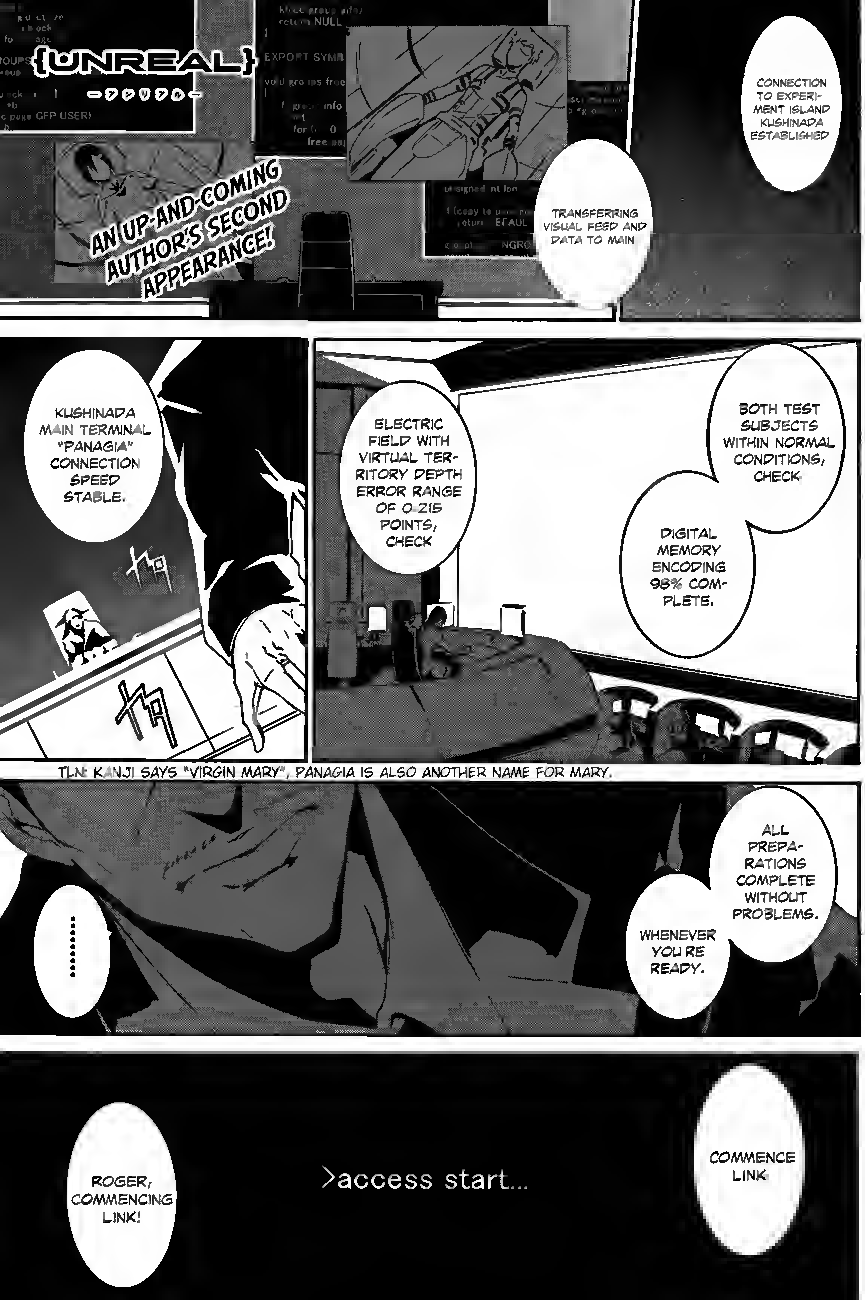
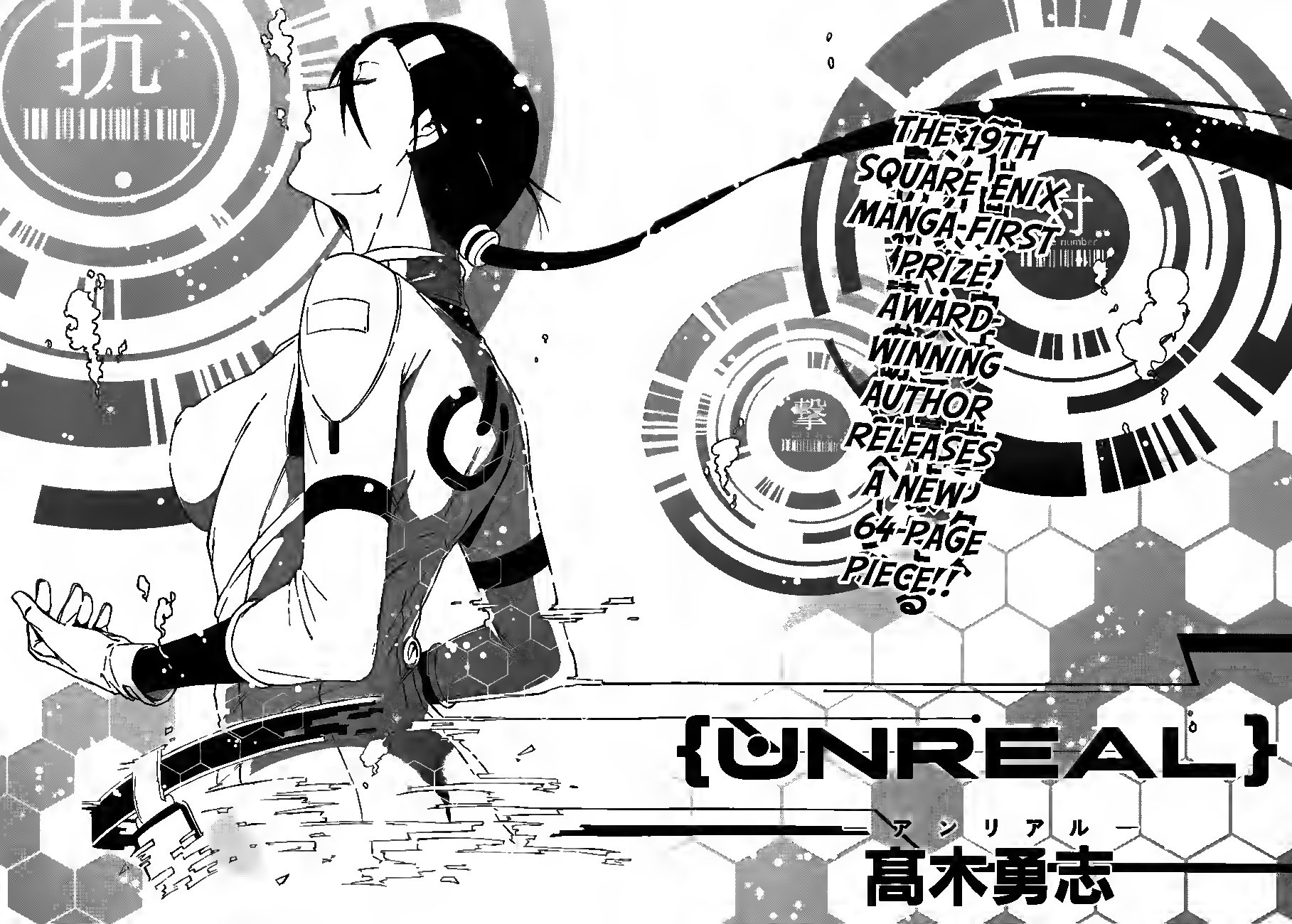
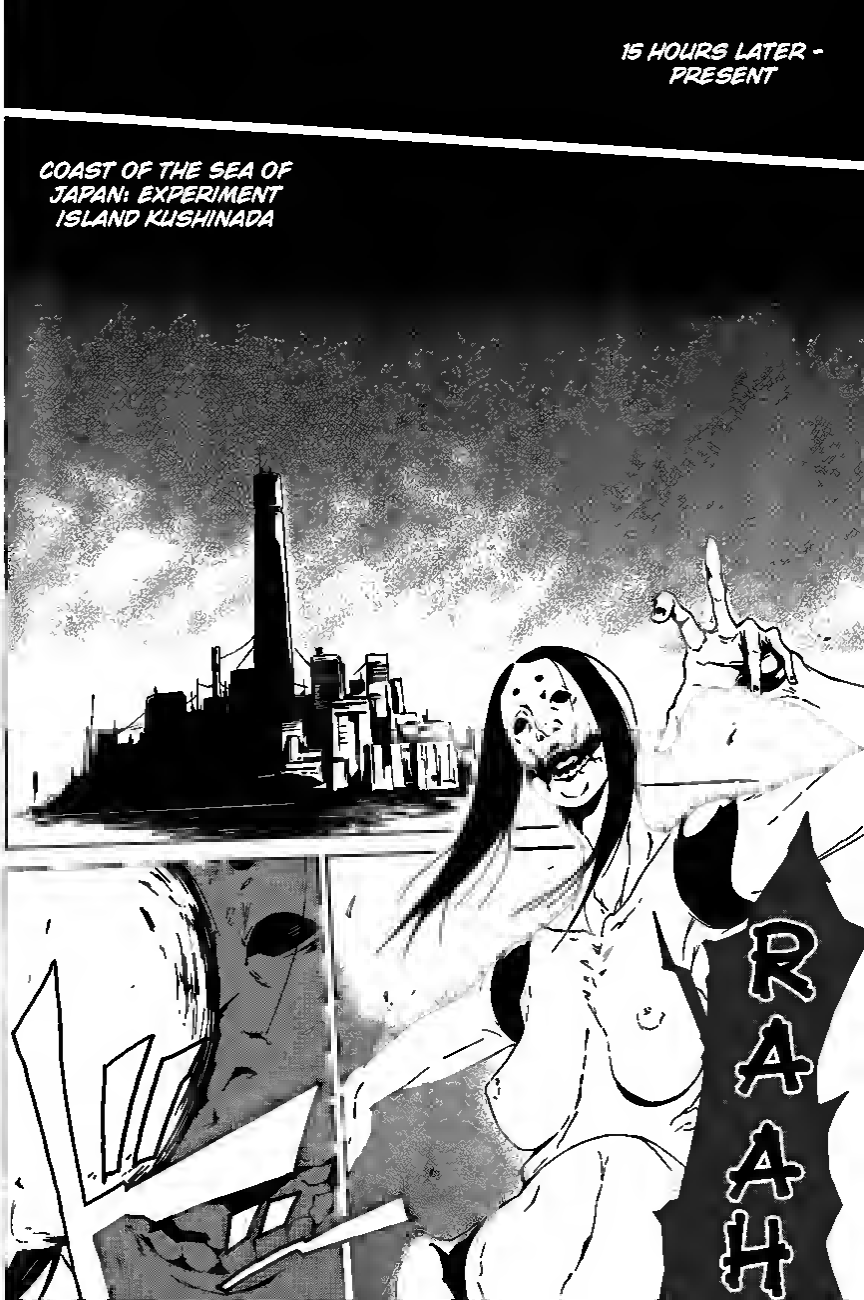

{UNREAL}
ーアンリアルー
AN UP-AND-COMING AUTHOR'S SECOND APPEARANCE!
CONNECTION TO EXPERIMENT ISLAND KUSHINADA ESTABLISHED
TRANSFERRING VISUAL FEED AND DATA TO MAIN
KUSHINADA MAIN TERMINAL "PANAGIA" CONNECTION SPEED STABLE.
ELECTRIC FIELD WITH VIRTUAL TERRITORY DEPTH ERROR RANGE OF 0.215 POINTS, CHECK
BOTH TEST SUBJECTS WITHIN NORMAL CONDITIONS, CHECK
DIGITAL MEMORY ENCODING 98% COMPLETE.
TL/N: KANJI SAYS "VIRGIN MARY", PANAGIA IS ALSO ANOTHER NAME FOR MARY.
ALL PREPARATIONS COMPLETE WITHOUT PROBLEMS.
WHENEVER YOU'RE READY.
.....
ROGER, COMMENCING LINK!
>access start...
COMMENCE LINK.

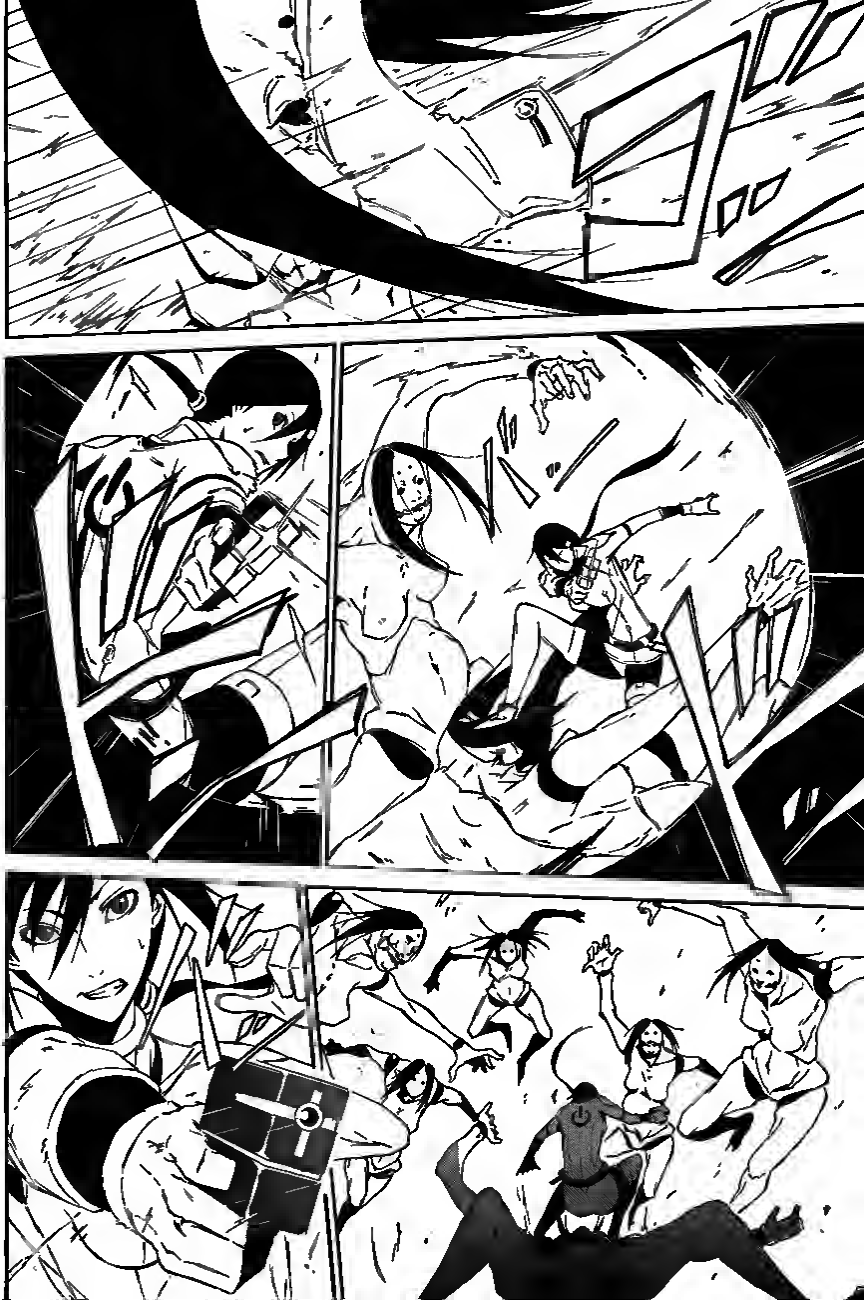

抗
THE 19TH SQUARE ENIX MANGA-FIRST (PRIZE) AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR RELEASES A NEW 64-PAGE PIECE!!
撃
{UNREAL}
アンリアル
髙木勇志


15 HOURS LATER - PRESENT
COAST OF THE SEA OF JAPAN: EXPERIMENT ISLAND KUSHINADA
RAAH

KUH...
THERE ARE TOO MANY "BUGS".
IT'S AS IF THEY'RE ENDLESS...
RAY! CAN'T YOU DO SOME-THING!?
Geez, I got it.
sound

I'M PREPARING A "DELETE ALL" PROGRAM AS WE SPEAK.
TWENTY SECONDS UNTIL DE PLOYMENT.
FOR THAT WHILE ATTRACT AS MANY OF THEM AS YOU CAN
ROGER.
WHAT A BOTHER

LET'S DO IT WITH A BANG, SHALL WE?

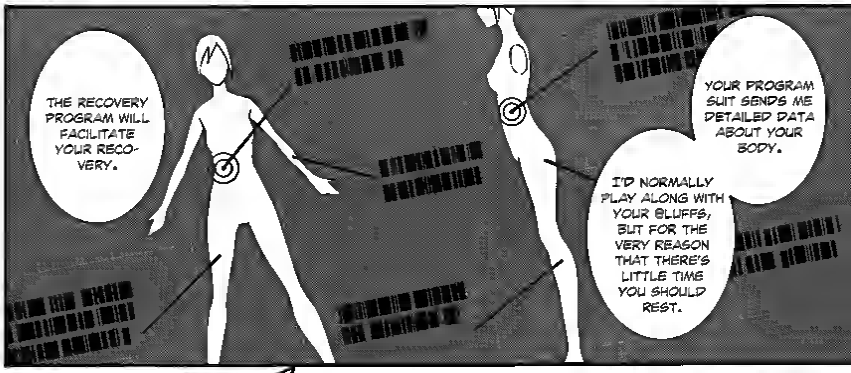


RAY!!
Fixation of deployment coordinates complete!
Executing "delete all"!

消

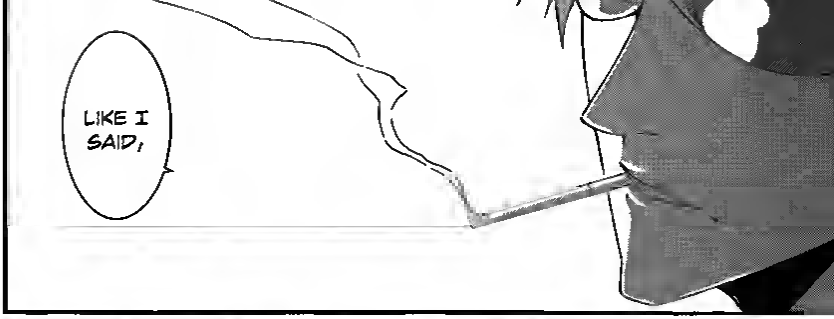
Mission end.
Conclusion of program confirmed.
Fuu...
Precisely 20 seconds, as expected of your great skills.
NOTHING'S GOING TO COME OUT OF FLATTERY, Y'KNOW.
BESIDES, WE'RE ON THE SAME LEVEL, AREN'T WE?
IF THE DEBUGGER'S EXCELLENT, THE PROGRAMMER CAN COMPILE IN SAFETY.
GOOD WORK, ENA.

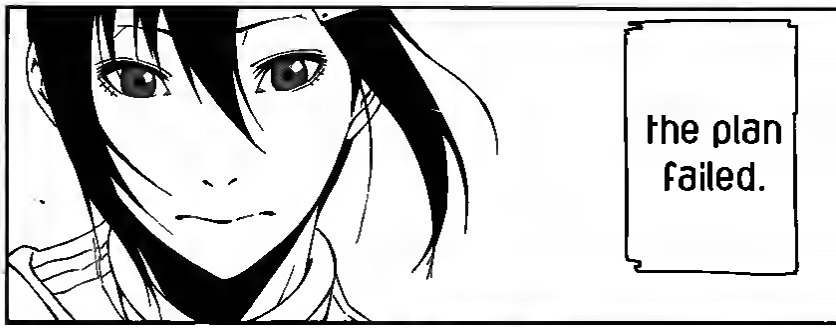
No bugs or viruses detected in the vicinity.
It seems like we managed to eradicate most of them just then.
Perfect timing. Take a short break. Probably no excessive movement for at least half a day.
Your right side hurts, doesn't it?
Don't push yourself.
.....
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
DESPITE HAVING NO TIME, EVEN UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS, TO REST NOW IS-

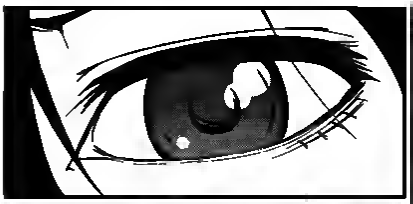

THE RECOVERY PROGRAM WILL FACILITATE YOUR RECOVERY.
I'D NORMALLY PLAY ALONG WITH YOUR BLUFFS, BUT FOR THE VERY REASON THAT THERE'S LITTLE TIME YOU SHOULD REST.
YOUR PROGRAM SUIT SENDS ME DETAILED DATA ABOUT YOUR BODY.

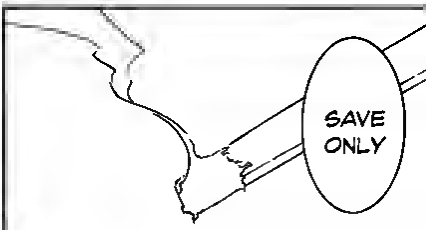
THUD
BANG
Wai-
Oi!
Be careful with the terminal!!
Ah, if you'd like, how about a full body massage?
And from your height and weight I can even measure your three sizes-

Maybe I should also carry out your suit readjustment while I'm at it
The recovery program's functioning well
Hey, Ray
MM?
IS THIS REALLY THE "REAL WORLD"?
OR COULD IT BE THAT I'M ACTUALLY...


LIKE I SAID,


the plan failed.




SAVE ONLY

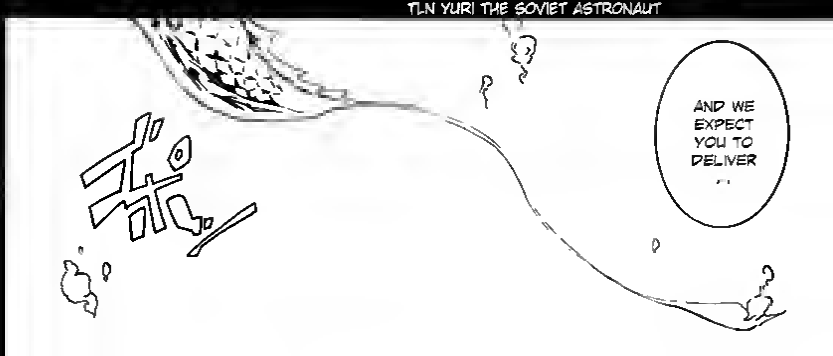
"VIRTUAL MIGRATION PROGRAM"?

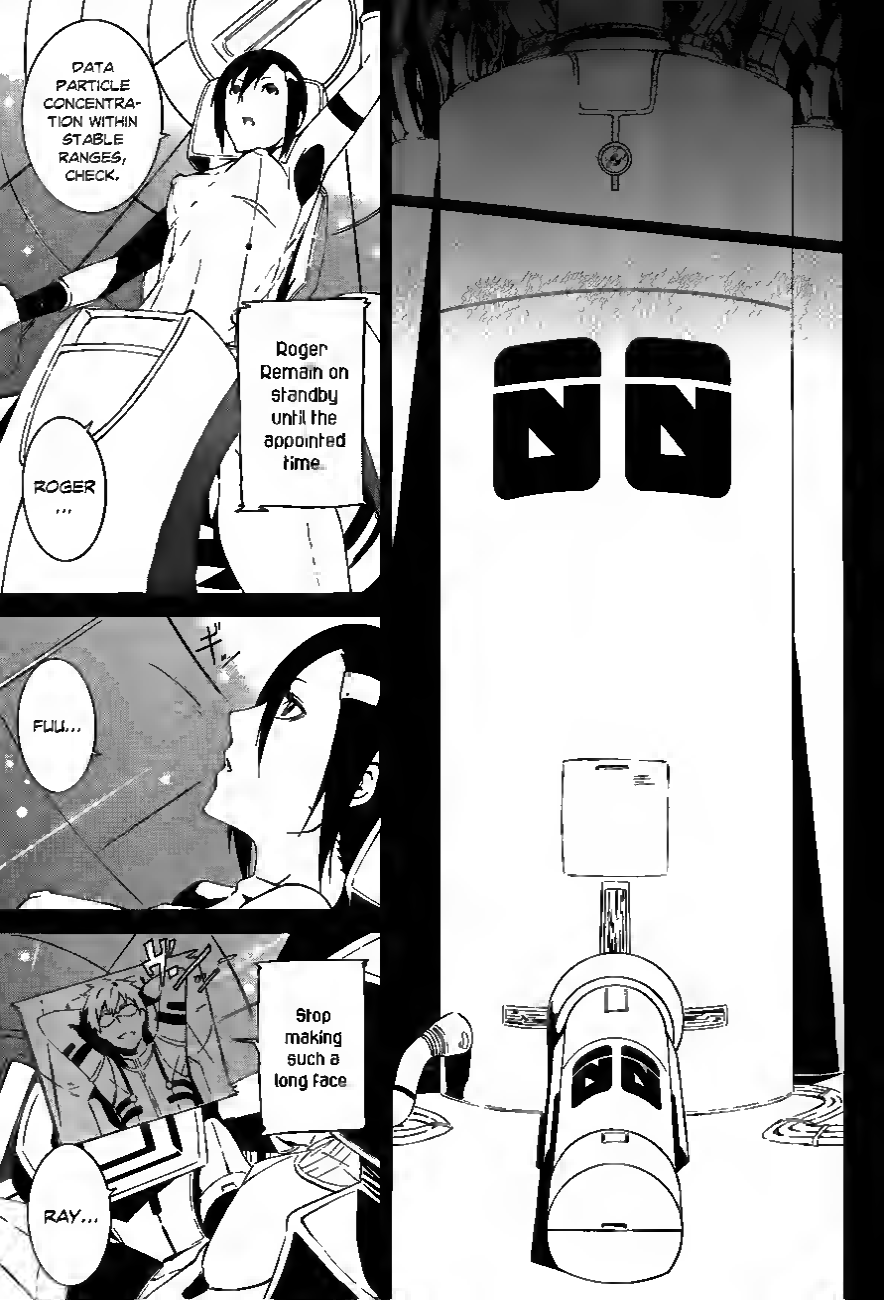
ONE EXCEP-TION...

IT IS A PROGRAM THAT CONVERTS INDIVIDUALS WITH PERSONALITIES AND MEMORIES COMPLETELY INTO DIGITAL FORM
IT RESIDES IN A NETWORK WITH INFINITE ENHANCEMENT.
IT CAN SHIFT INTO A FORM OF EXISTENCE GREATER THAN HUMAN BEINGS
THIS WORLD IS ALREADY BORDERING ON DESTRUCTION, REACHING CRITICAL LIMITS.
SUCH AS OVER-POPULATION, FOOD SHORT-AGES, ENERGY PROBLEMS, DISCRIMINATION, POVERTY, WAR, AND LIFE AND DEATH.
I HAVE CONFIDENCE THIS PROGRAM WILL ALLOW FOR US TO RELEASE HUMANITY FROM ITS BONDS.

I'D LIKE YOU TO DESIGN THE BASE PROGRAM AND DEBUG FROM THAT SIDE.
I'M GOING TO GET YOU TWO TO UNDERGO THIS FIRST.
AS PART OF THE PROCEDURES WE WILL PREPARE A PERFECT BACKUP.
...SO BASICALLY WE'RE TO BE GUINEA PIGS?
YOU ARE OUR COMPANY'S MOST BOAST-WORTHY LEADING WORLD ENGINEERS.
THE MODERN DAY YURI GAGARIN.
...NO. IN YOUR CASE WOULD IT BE BETTER TO SAY ADAM AND EVE?

TLN YURI THE SOVIET ASTRONAUT



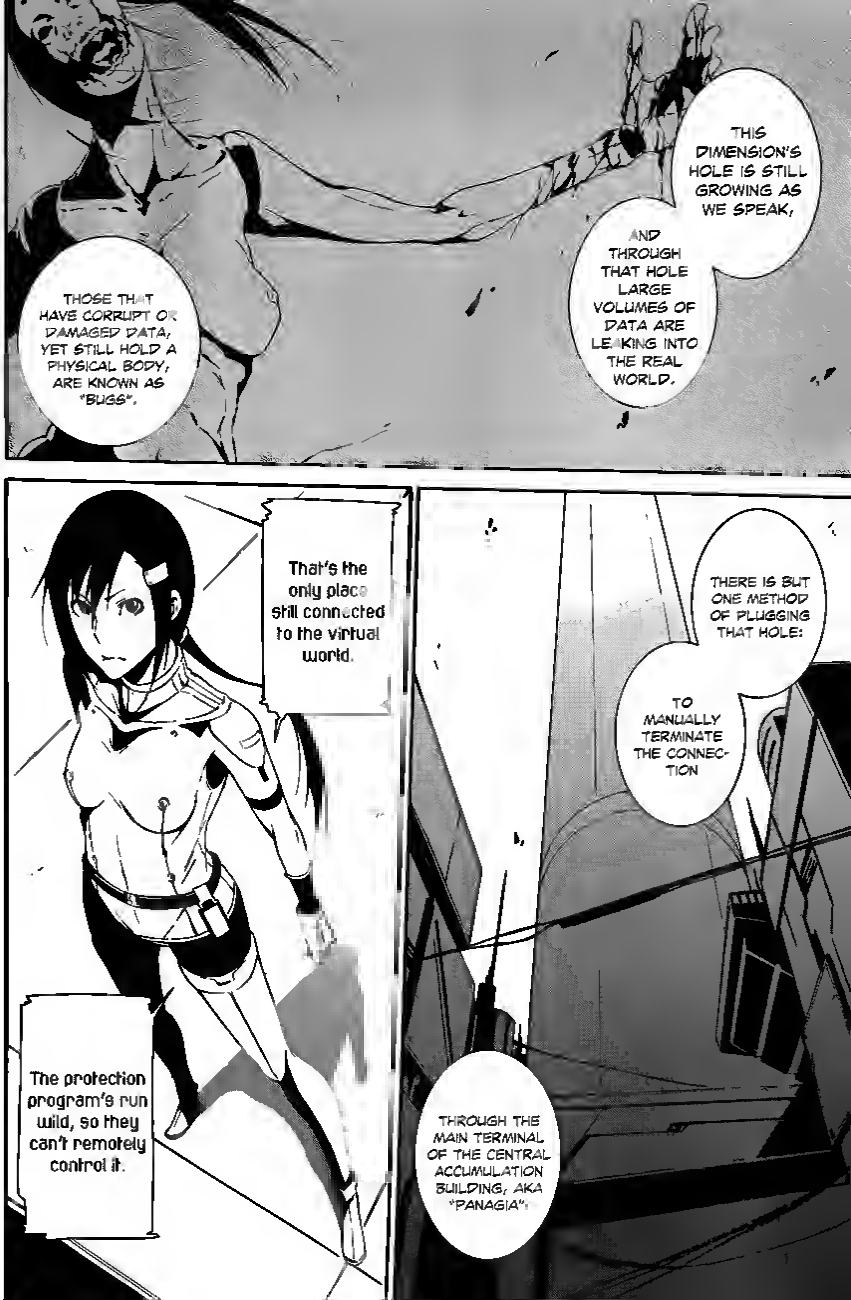

DATA PARTICLE CONCENTRATION WITHIN STABLE RANGES, CHECK.
Roger Remain on standby until the appointed time.
ROGER ...
FUU...
Stop making such a long face
RAY...

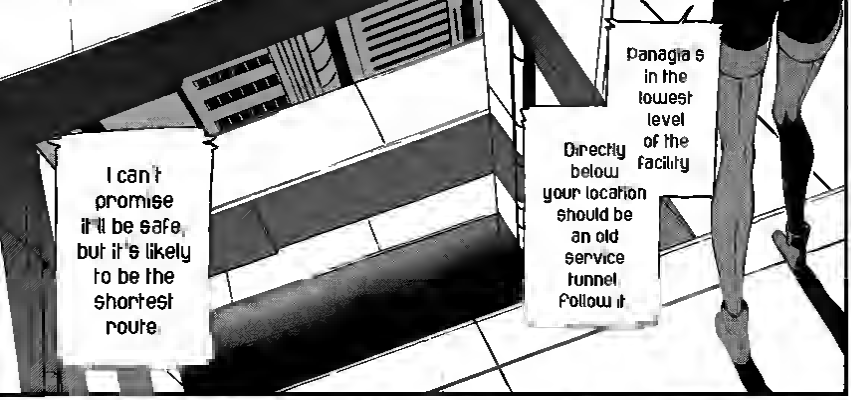
I'm sure that's only you
WELL, I CERTAINLY CAN'T GET COMFORTABLE IN THIS CONNECTION POD EITHER, SINCE IT PROHIBITS SMOKING.
BUT SPEAKING OF NOT BEING COMFORTABLE, THOSE HIGHER-UPS DECIDED TO ABANDON US HERE.
I WAS SURPRISED WHEN THEY JUST STAYED AT THEIR HEAD OFFICE, HIGH AND DRY.
Can't be helped nobody would want to be around to witness the underworld
Eh. No need to worry anyway. Since it's us, we'll be able to do it with flying colors.
THAT'S TRUE.
Where do you wanna go?
EH... I-
WHEN THIS IS OVER, LET'S SPLURGE OUR PAY AND GO OUT SOME-WHERE.
THE SEA, THE MOUNTAINS... PREFERABLY, A SEASIDE VACATION WOULD BE NICE.

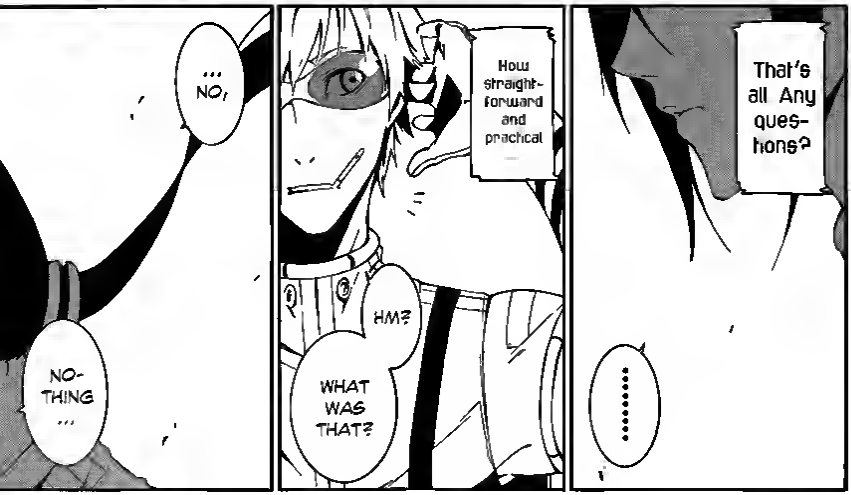
... WELL.
THIS IS BECOMING QUITE A HISTORICAL MOMENT.
All preparations complete
Commencing connection to virtual world shortly
Well then,
see you on the other side.

An error has occurred maximum permissible amount of data exceeded
Forced stop due to safety reasons
ピー
!?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, RAY!?
...Since I'm still talking I guess I'm all right over here
sound only
RAY!
E... na...
...E-
WH... WHAT'S GOING ON?
FORCED STOP ...!?
I'm fine, but what's going on!?
The ex- periment... what will come of digital onsf-
ENA... CALM DOWN AND LISTEN WELL.
THIS IS IMPOR TANT...

Experiment island Kushinada's center, "Central accumulation building"
Don't hold back. That's the Tower of Babel.
That's the final target this time
Let me run through this one final time.
PRESENT DAY. THE BORDER BETWEEN THE DIGITAL WORLD AND THE REAL WORLD IS VERY UNSTABLE.
DUE TO CONNECTION EXPERIMENTS THEY OPENED UP A HUGE HOLE.


THIS DIMENSION'S HOLE IS STILL GROWING AS WE SPEAK,
AND THROUGH THAT HOLE LARGE VOLUMES OF DATA ARE LEAKING INTO THE REAL WORLD.
THOSE THAT HAVE CORRUPT OR DAMAGED DATA, YET STILL HOLD A PHYSICAL BODY, ARE KNOWN AS "BUGS".
THERE IS BUT ONE METHOD OF PLUGGING THAT HOLE:
TO MANUALLY TERMINATE THE CONNEC-TION
THROUGH THE MAIN TERMINAL OF THE CENTRAL ACCUMULATION BUILDING, AKA "PANAGIA".
That's the only place still connected to the virtual world.
The protection program's run wild, so they can't remotely control it.


I can't promise it'll be safe, but it's likely to be the shortest route
Directly below your location should be an old service tunnel. Follow it
Panagia's in the lowest level of the facility


...NO,
NO-THING...
How straight-forward and practical...
HM?
WHAT WAS THAT?
That's all. Any ques-tions?
.....

FUU...
IS THIS REALLY THE "REAL WORLD"?

WELL, I'M REALLY TEMPTED TO DOUBT THAT.
I MEAN, "A PROGRAM GAINS A BODY AND IS INCARNATED"?
EVEN THAT'S JUST A BIT TOO FARFETCHED.
WHETHER I WANT IT OR NOT, THE WORLD KEEPS ON CHANGING.
WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE GETTING DRAGGED INTO IT.
REALITY IS SUCH A CRUEL THING...
YEESH.

The hole's become quite a bit more unstable.
We're running out of time. Hurry ahead.

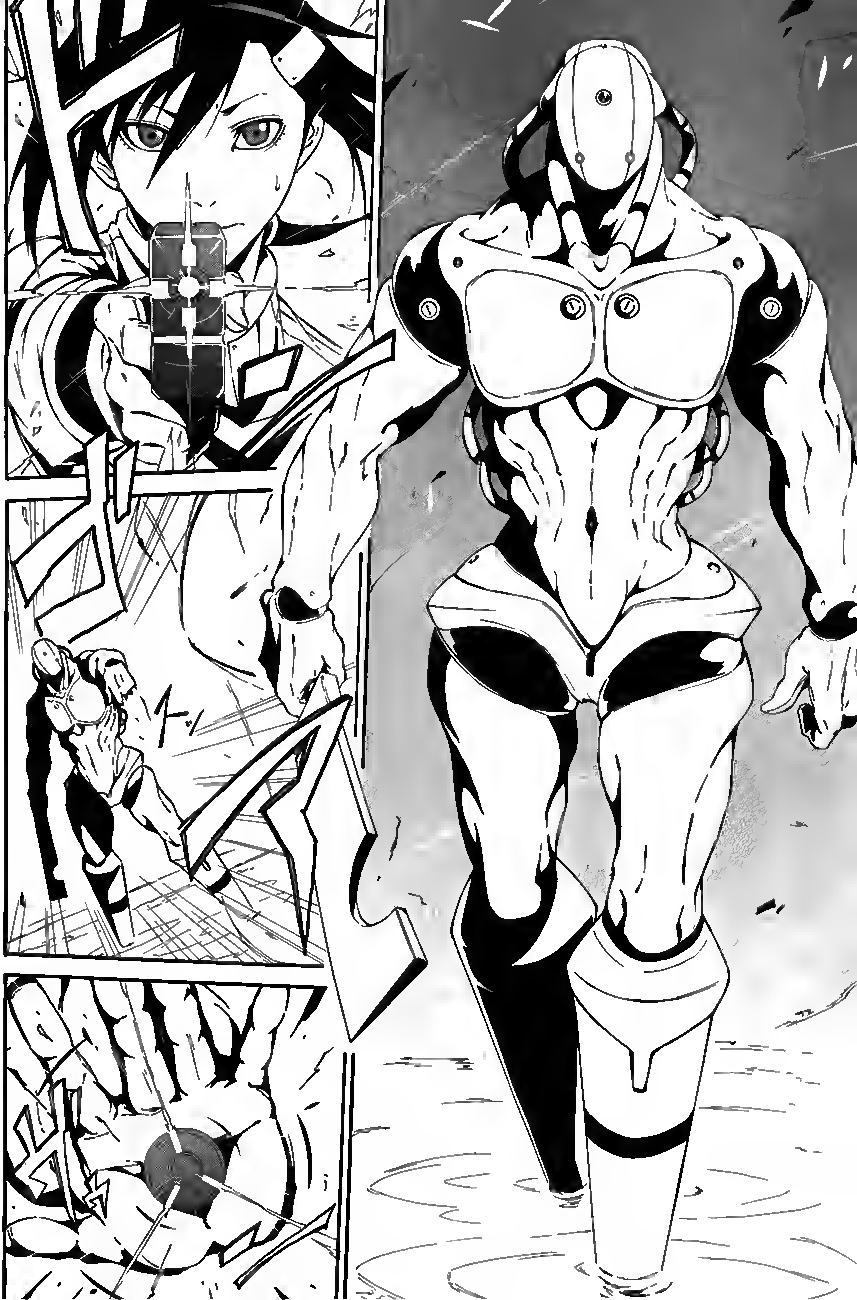
Roger
Proceed with caution
Highly likely that the data particle concentration's gone all weird
"Panagia" should be just beyond that bulkhead in front of you

You're going to have to get that bulkhead open.
For now, go touch that lock terminal.
!!
Warning! Bulkhe... loc... disen... ed
Bulkh... ope...ng
Be careful!
I didn't unlock that!

KUH

High energy signature ahead!
Shit! Ena, dodge!

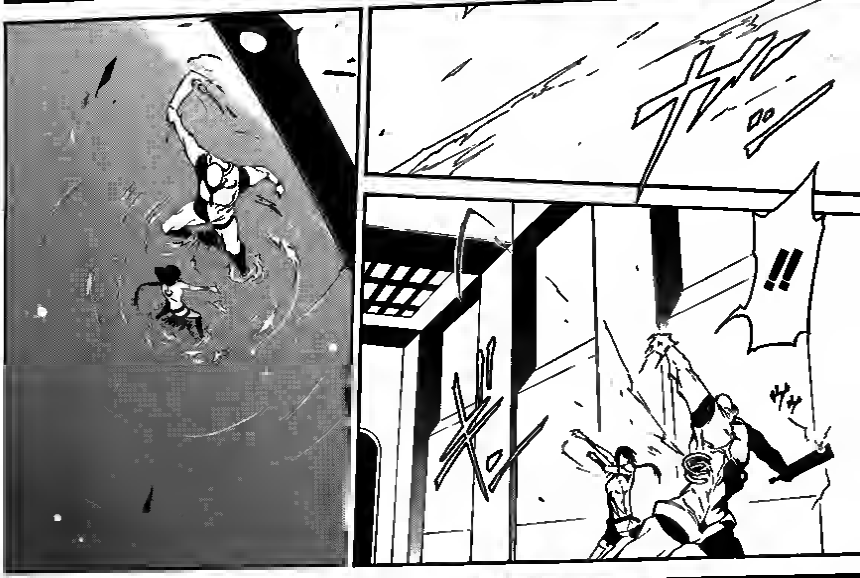
パシャ
ゴゴ…



ANTI-PROGRAM!?
The influence of the hole's expansion, huh?
It's progressed so damn fast in the last few hours.
Anyway, that tiny pistol won't even make a dent in that.
In 30 seconds I'll uplink you a new set of equipment.
Until then, hold out against this guy

ROGER!
ヒュオ
30
29
28
>starting program

23
22
18
17
16

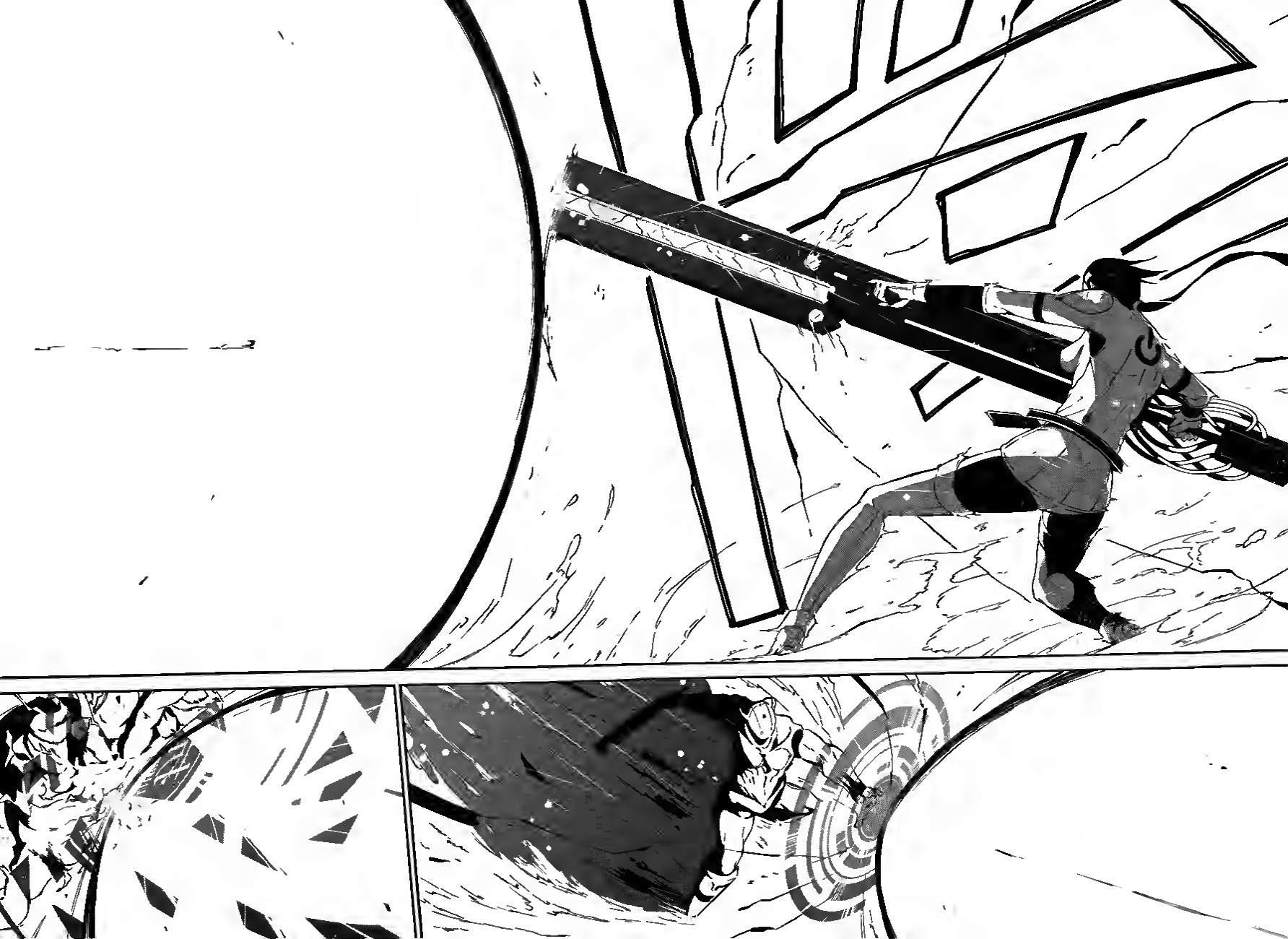

!!

while (stride) {
max = gidsetsize - stride
for (base = 0; base < max; bas
int left = base
int right = left + stride
gid_t tmp = GROUP_A
while (left >= 0 && (
GROUP_AT(group_info
GROUP_AT(gro
right = left
left -= stride
}
GROUP_AT(group_info, right) = tmp
stride /= 3
9
10
11

…5
4
3…

Made you wait, eh?

It's doesn't have such a refined output capable of rapid-fire
Decide it in one shot
IT WAS EXACTLY 30 SECONDS.



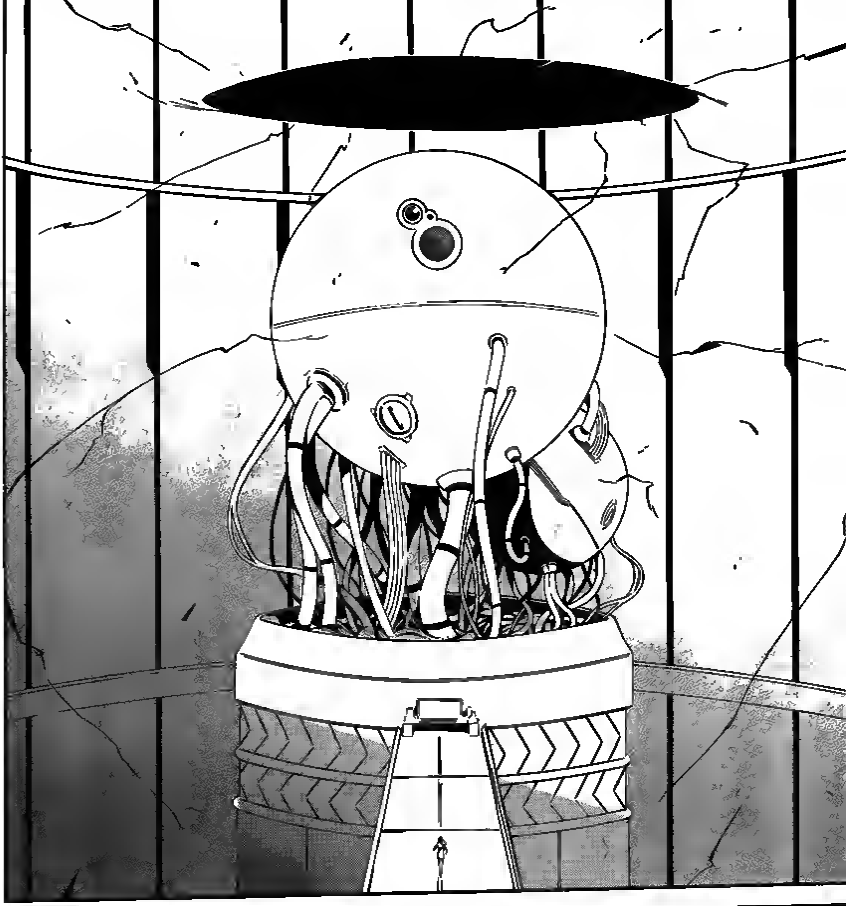
...HAH
HAA, HAH
HAH ...

RAY...

.....?

RAY ...!
Hacking completed
I barely managed to get it done, but seems like I somehow made it in time
Phew, that was really damn close
IT...IT STOP...PED?

Can you stand, Ena?
YEAH, SOMEWHAT.
YEAH, MY BAD.
ONCE THE ANTI-PROGRAM WAS DESTROYED I IMMEDIATELY STARTED TO HACK IT,
BUT IT WAS MORE COMPLEX THAN EXPECTED, AND EVEN THOUGH IT STOPPED FUNCTIONING, IT TOOK LONGER THAN EXPECTED TO ACTUALLY STOP.
Ahh, sorry, sorry.
We're almost out of time.
Panagia's right there! Hurry!
!?



THAT'S ...
As expected, the center of the hole was here
Due to the data particles' weight, space itself will tear.
If you don't close it quickly, everything's going to be swallowed up by the virtual world!

There's nothing difficult to it.
All you need to do is manually force-close all connections from the terminal.
The hole should then close up completely.
WHAT!?
Before that
There's one thing I need to do
Oi, what're you saying!?
There's nothing else you could possible do now!
IF YOU DON'T HURRY, THE HOLE'S GOING TO EXPAND EVEN FAS-
I'm sorry.
But.. I decided from the start..

NGH ...
... BAS- TARD.
I'D BRING YOU BACK FROM THE VIRTUAL WORLD.
THAT, WITHOUT FAIL.
Who the hell cares about me!!?
Hurry up and shut it down!!
Ena!!
Ena!!!

...SOMETHING IMPORTANT?
.....
...IT SEEMS THAT THE DIGITAL TRANSFER CONNECTION SOMEHOW FAILED.
AT THAT MOMENT A HOLE IN THE BORDER BETWEEN REAL AND VIRTUAL APPEARED, AND HUGE AMOUNTS OF DATA BEGAN FLOODING OUT.
That's... why did that happen ...?
WHETHER THE PLAN WAS TOO NAIVE OR THERE WAS SOME KIND OF MISTAKE THE CAUSE IS UNKNOWN.
DUE TO SEVERAL HUNDRED YOTABYTES OF DATA FLOW, THE CONNECTIVE EQUIPMENT FROZE
The outcome of that... I was forced back by the waves of data
You weren't able to be digitalized and so you returned to your body
AND NOW...

...NOW I'M
UNABLE TO LEAVE THE VIRTUAL WORLD.
WHA...?
...LIES.
There was most likely a tiny amount of lag.
It seems that the connective equipment, rather than being flooded managed to complete the connection and digitalization a split second faster.
However, being able to survive in that temporary rift was the silver lining
Via the terminal, there's a certain degree of communication possible, as we're doing now

THE SYSTEM OF THE ENTIRE ISLAND IS GOING OUT OF CONTROL,
WHICH PREVENTS MORE THAN CONTACT WITH HQ.
...EVEN AS WE SPEAK, DATA CONTINUES TO LEAK.
THE TWO OF US
can't do anything but sever the bonds tying the virtual and real world together.
We must cut apart with our own hands
The two worlds slurring together

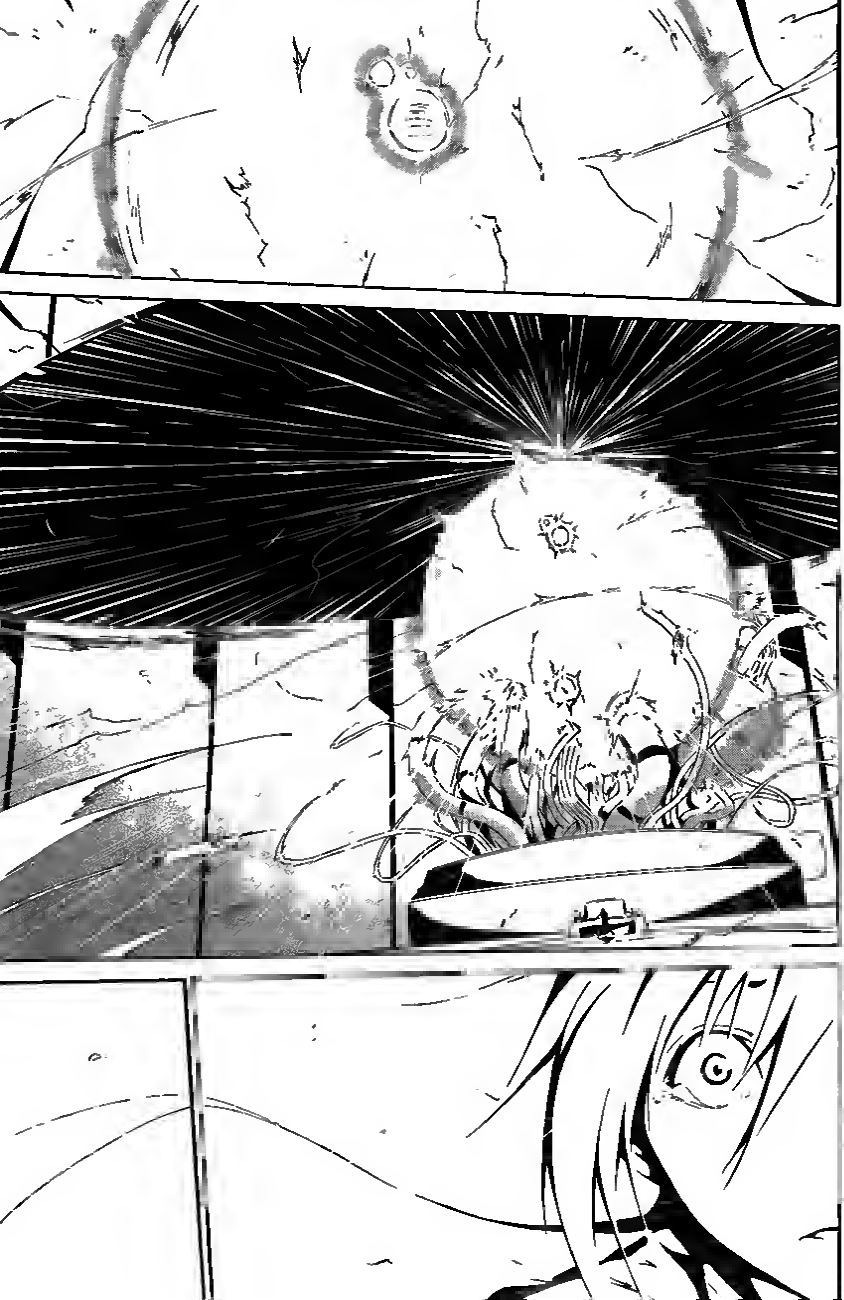
Don't do anything stupid!
Ena!
Oi, are you listening?!

In this situation, if you forcefully try to decode my data
the hole will suddenly expand all in one go, and then who knows what will happen!?

WE DECIDED TO STOP IT TOGETHER, DIDN'T WE?!
SAY SOMETHING, ENA!
Do you remember, Ray?

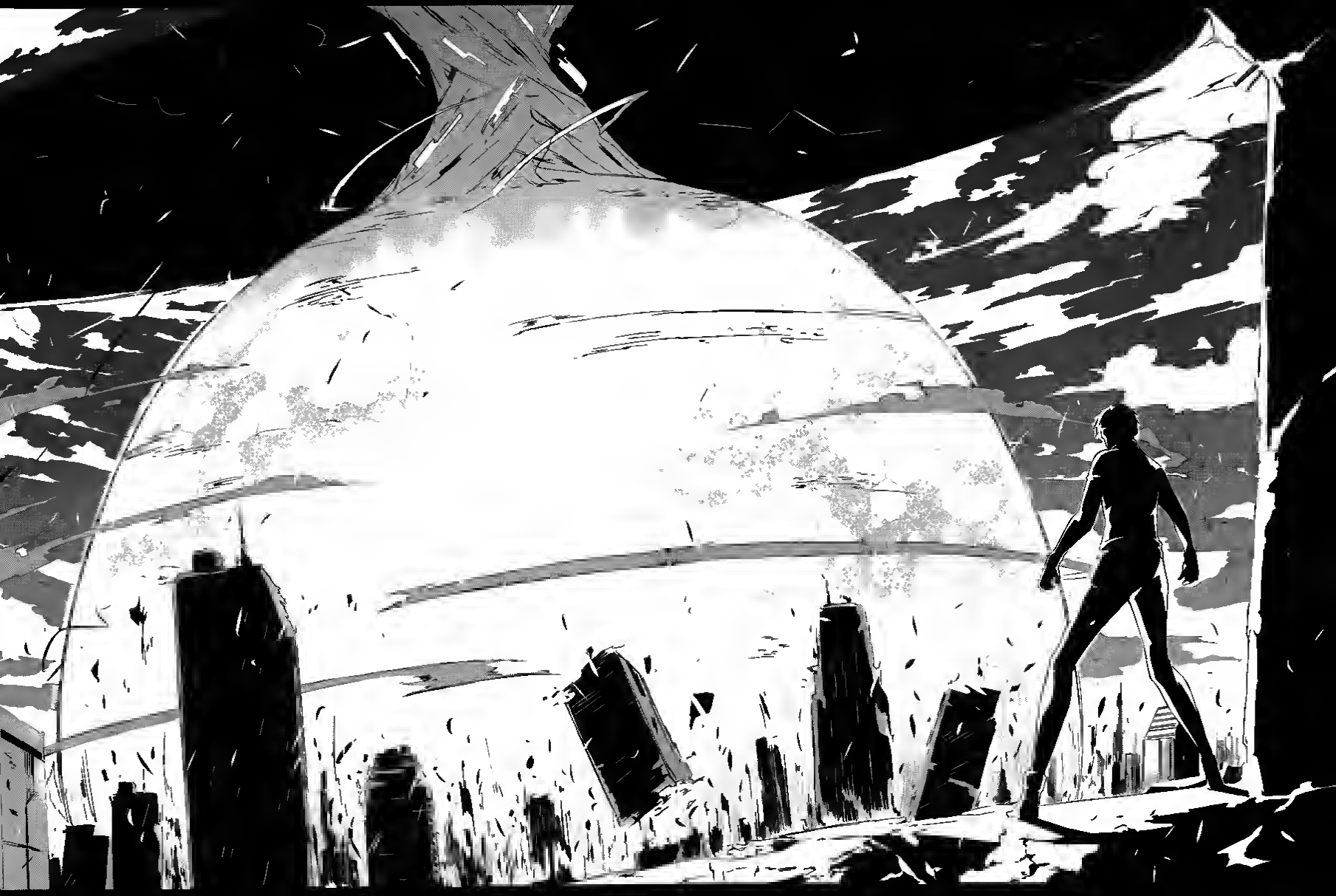
IF... IF YOU AREN'T BESIDE ME...I...COULD STILL GO ANYWHERE... ...BUT...
THAT TIME... I MISSED MY CHANCE TO SAY IT BUT...I'M FINE WITH GOING ANY-WHERE.
YOU SAID WE'D GO OUT SOMEWHERE ONCE THIS IS ALL OVER.
...BUT
IF YOU'RE NOT THERE, IT'D BE POINTLESS.
DON'T FUCK AROUND WITH ME.
That's why I want to save you...
More than the world, more than anything, I want to...

If you don't even have a body, it'll all be pointless anyway!
Don't just say whatever to suit yourself!!
If it's like that, and the world gets destroyed...
Stop it, Ena!
En-



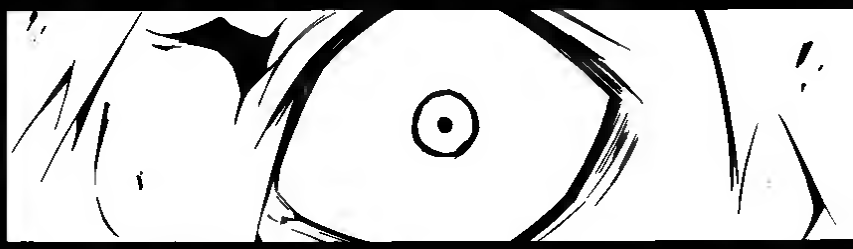
...WAY.
I RE-TURNED? TO THE REAL WORLD?
ENA...
KUH
...NO

HAH
HAH
HAH
...



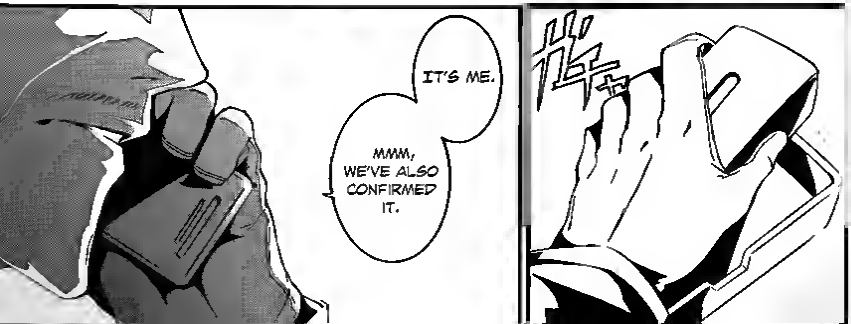
...A HEATLESS, SOUNDLESS EXPLOSION OF DATA

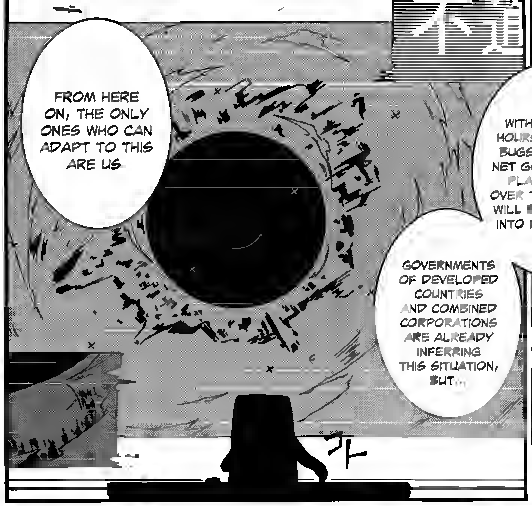
SWALLOWING UP EVERYTHING, AS IF IT WERE...



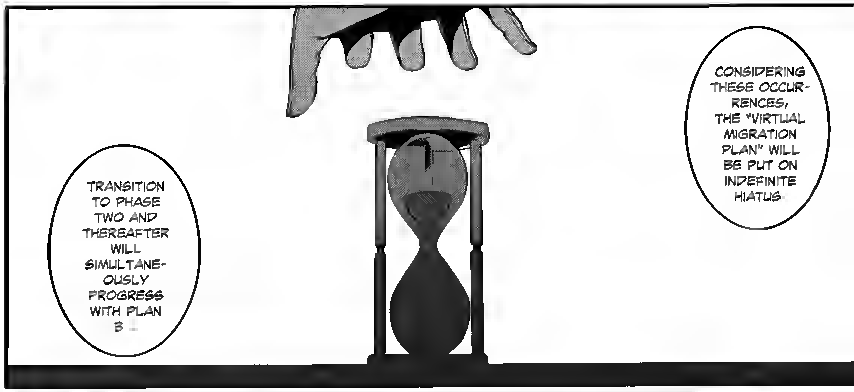
A LIGHT SIGNIFYING BOTH THE END
AND BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.

LARGE-SCALE EXPLOSION OF DATA PARTICLES CONFIRMED AT KUSHINADA
CONNECTION WITH KUSHINADA CURRENTLY INTERRUPTED. RANGE OF COMMUNICATIONS DISRUPTION EXPANDING RAPIDLY.
SWITCHING COMMS TO SATELLITE AND GROUND CABLE.
SATELLITE ACQUIRED TRANSFERRING VISUAL FEED OF KUSHINADA TO THE MAIN MONITOR


IT'S ME.
MMM, WE'VE ALSO CONFIRMED IT.


FROM HERE ON, THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN ADAPT TO THIS ARE US.
WITHIN A FEW HOURS, DUE TO BUGS AND THE NET GOING WILD, PLACES ALL OVER THE WORLD WILL BE THROWN INTO DISARRAY.
GOVERNMENTS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND COMBINED CORPORATIONS ARE ALREADY INFERRING THIS SITUATION, BUT...

I'M RELUCTANT, BUT WE HAD FACTORED IN AND ARRANGED FOR THE DANGER OF THIS OUTCOME BEFOREHAND.


CONSIDERING THESE OCCURRENCES, THE "VIRTUAL MIGRATION PLAN" WILL BE PUT ON INDEFINITE HIATUS.
TRANSITION TO PHASE TWO AND THEREAFTER WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY PROGRESS WITH PLAN B...

THE NEW WORLD
>order in new world...
IS IN OUR HANDS.
END